

Speak up & be heard

CONSUMER REGISTER lists summaries of major consumer proposals before Federal agencies. If you wish to submit written comments, include your name & address, state the name & *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

Vitamins A & D

Feb. 12 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to limit the amounts of vitamins A & D in vitamin products sold without a prescription.

FDA is concerned because some vitamin supplements contain up to 60 times the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamin D & up to 10 times RDA for vitamin A.

Excessive use of these vitamins can have adverse effects, some of them serious. For example, too much vitamin A over a long period of time can increase pressure within the skull & give the symptoms of a brain tumor. It can also retard growth in children. Too much vitamin D can retard mental & physical growth in children.

FDA is proposing a daily limit of 10,000 international units (IU) for vitamin A & 400 IU for vitamin D. (The RDA of vitamin A for children between 1 & 9 is 2,000-3,500 units; for vitamin D, the RDA for all children & adults is 400 IU.)

High dosage vitamin products prescribed by doctors for specific reasons would not be affected by the proposal.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 14, page 26618. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Truck-camper information

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is requiring consumer safety information to be provided by manufacturers of campers & of trucks designed to carry them.

Slide-in campers made after Jan. 1 of this year must have permanent labels providing information that can be used to reduce overloading & improper load placement in truck-camper combinations as well as to reduce unsafe matching of campers and trucks. Overloading & improper load placement can result in accidents because of adverse effects of these load factors on steering & braking.

Each camper label must also have the following statement with the appropriate information: "Camper Weight Is ____ lbs. Maximum When It Contains Standard Equipment, ____ gal. of Water, ____ lbs. of Bottled Gas, & ____ cu. ft. Refrigerator (or Ice Box With ____ lbs. of Ice as applicable). Consult Owner's Manual (or Data Sheet as applicable) for Weights of Additional or Optional Equipment."

Manufacturers are also to provide an owner's manual with more detailed information. After Sept. 1, the manual must include pictures showing the camper's center of gravity & proper truck-camper match.

Effective March 1, manufacturers of trucks to carry slide-in campers must also provide consumers with similar types of safety information.

Details—*Federal Register*: Aug. 15, page 16947; Dec. 14, page 26605.

Hot dogs

Feb. 21 is deadline for comments on an Agriculture Dept. proposal that would ban meat by-products from frankfurters & other cooked sausage products, including bologna, vienna sausages & knockwurst. The proposal would also require more explicit labeling of these products.

Agriculture's proposal would limit sausage producers to the use of skeletal meat & muscle parts of tongue, diaphragm, heart & esophagus. They would not have the option of including meat by-products in their cooked sausage products. (A by-product is any part of a meat-producing animal capable of use as human food, other than meat. By-products traditionally include liver, pancreas & brain, as well as skin, stomach, snout, lips & spleen.)

Agriculture is providing consumers & others opportunity to express their views on the ingredients of cooked sausages to resolve a conflict. Recent publicity surrounding such sausage products indicates that by-product ingredients are unattractive to many consumers. It appears that there is a popular opinion that by-products should not be chopped & processed in products so as to be unidentifiable. (This opinion does not appear to be offset by the fact that ingredient statements on these products' labels declare each ingredient by its common or usual name, including of course, any meat by-products used.)

On the other hand, by-products have traditionally received acceptance for human food purposes. They are generally regarded as wholesome & nutritious. Moreover, if by-products were banned from frankfurters & other cooked sausages, price of these could be expected to go up.

The proposed standard would also modify the labeling of cooked sausage products. These products could no longer bear phrases on their labels such as "all meat" or "all beef." This change is being taken because of judicial opinion that such terms are misleading when referring to cooked sausages & are, therefore, invalid under certain Federal law.

The proposed standard also calls for the product names to include the names of any binders used. For example, "Frankfurters, Nonfat Dry Milk Added".

All sausages would still be allowed to include up to 15% poultry meat, up to 10% water & no more than 30% fat.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 23, page 28430. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250. Consumers who wish to comment orally should write to Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250 by Feb. 21.

Advertising

March 1 is deadline for comments on Federal Trade Commission's proposal for guidelines on the use of en-

dorsements & testimonials in advertising.

FTC is concerned because many ads purport to be endorsements by apparently qualified experts or "typical consumers" when in reality these persons are paid actors.

As a result, FTC has proposed guidelines to help advertisers conform to the requirements of fair competition set forth in the Federal Trade Commission Act.

Six guideline examples given by FTC are

1. Endorsement of a product must be by an expert in that particular field. An "engineer" endorsing an automobile must have special knowledge or experience with the design & performance of automobiles.

2. An endorsement must be based on the relative merits of like products. In order for a commercial "home cleaning service" to endorse a particular brand of cleanser, the cleaning service must initially use the brand & judge it to be superior to other cleansers.

3. Any connection between endorser & seller, such as a product testing laboratory controlled by the seller, must be disclosed.

4. A "typical consumer's" experience should be average for all consumers. Thus, if the "consumer's" endorsement refers to the lifetime service of a product, it should represent the average & ordinary experience of consumers generally with the product rather than the particular experience of the televised "consumer."

5. Endorsements by organizations must meet a more stringent standard of truthfulness than endorsements by individuals. An "easy-to-repair" endorsement by an association of repairmen, for example, must be backed by detailed information necessary to substantiate the claim.

6. Endorsements for children's products will face greater scrutiny. These may be questioned by FTC even if they would be considered acceptable in adult ads. For example, a racing car driver would not be considered an expert in recommending toy cars while he would be qualified in endorsing an actual racing car.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 1, page 25548. Send comments to Assistant Director for National Advertising, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, 633 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20580.

Consumer credit

March 5 is deadline for commenting on Federal Trade Commission's revised proposal on consumer rights in credit deals. See this issue of CONSUMER NEWS, page 2.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 5, page 892.

Tomato-lemon juice

Food & Drug Administration will permit test marketing of "Frozen Concentrated Tomato Juice with Concentrated Lemon Juice" for 12 months, ending Dec. 18, 1973.

The new product, containing 2% lemon juice, will be

produced by Sunkist Growers Inc. of Ontario, CA. When reconstituted, it will be sold in dispensers in restaurants, coffee shops & snack bars.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 28, page 28642.

Youth fares

Civil Aeronautics Board has approved new fares for the 12 to 14-year-old youth group ranging up to a 26% increase in peak season rates. The new fares were formulated as a result of agreements among airlines belonging to the International Air Transport Association.

The agreement sets individual & group youth rates for travel between the U.S. & Europe, Africa & Middle East for the Dec. 15, 1972-Oct. 31, 1973, period.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 20, page 28092.

Aspirin powders

Food & Drug Administration has exempted certain non-prescription drug preparations containing aspirin from Poison Prevention Packaging Act requirements for child-proof packaging standards. Exemption applies to manufacturers of campers & of trucks designed for them.

FDA based its action in part on the results of a study that showed that small children found it difficult to get opened packages of aspirin powder to their mouths without spilling; thus, it was difficult for them to swallow the contents.

FDA said 7 consumers opposed the exemption but failed to provide data to substantiate their contention.

Details—*Federal Register*: Sept. 13, page 18563; Dec. 28, page 28624; CONSUMER REGISTER: Nov. 1.

Also noteworthy

Methadone—Food & Drug Administration establishes special conditions for use of methadone, a drug used to treat heroin addiction, to combat problem of methadone addiction. *FR*: Dec. 15, p. 26790 & 26807.

Motorcycle Brakes—Transportation Dept. proposes amendments to safety standard for motorcycle brakes. *FR*: Dec. 15, p. 26739.

Skin test revision—Food & Drug Administration proposes new test for skin irritation caused by hazardous substances. *FR*: Dec. 19, p. 27635.

Smoked fish—Food & Drug Administration proposes relaxing certain temperature restrictions in the approved process for bringing smoked & smoke-flavored fish. *FR*: Dec. 23, p. 28426.

Bank records—Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s new rules provide for public disclosure of basic financial information about insured mutual savings banks & insured commercial banks chartered by states that are not members of Federal Reserve System. *FR*: Dec. 28, p. 28607.

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